



## West Africa Regional Economic Bulletin | October 2021

Dear Colleagues, Partners, and Friends,

Resilience, persistence, and partnerships are the themes that are resonating across West Africa. In this edition, we're taking you inside an innovative garment factory in Ghana to give you a glimpse of the pioneering work taking place to produce a sustainable source of surgical-grade masks. These needed masks are making a difference in Ghana, in the sub-region, and are available to international markets. It's a story of creative commerce, backed with compassion in a time where pivoting actions to sustain productivity is vital. The final two stories highlight local partnerships formed to increase access to energy and ensure food security across the sub-region. We hope you are encouraged by these success stories, as we all continue to work together to push past this pandemic. Please stay safe and healthy!

Sincerely,

Matthew Anderson

Office Director

USAID/West Africa | Regional Economic Growth Office (REGO)

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### Trailblazers: USAID helps a Ghanaian Garment Company produce International Surgical Masks for the Global Market



*Maagrace Factory worker attaching ear loops ultrasonically to mask.*

**Accra, Ghana:** With support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Ethical Apparel Africa (EAA) has launched Ghana's first ISO-7 certified surgical mask production facility, breaking new ground in manufacturing capability.

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic sparked a global scramble for medical grade Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), with developing nations in particular struggling to secure a reliable supply of certified protective gear for healthcare providers. Foreseeing a long-term need in the West African region for reliable PPE supply chains, [EAA](#) conducted extensive research and developed a roadmap to establish a world-class medical-grade surgical mask facility in Ghana. This work was done in partnership with the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), which provided specialized guidance to ensure the surgical masks meet international standards.

With support from USAID, EAA has now made this roadmap a reality with the construction of an ISO-7 certified clean room in Maagrace Garment Industries Limited in Koforidua, Eastern Region, Ghana. This will ensure that masks meet the standards for bacterial filtration efficiency and particulate filtration of the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM). Along with establishing this infrastructure, EAA is conducting extensive training at the local factory, Maagrace, where this facility will be launched. EAA and the ANSI are also engaging with the Ghana Standards Authority (GSA) to ensure all local requirements are met and to build local capacity on PPE standard evaluation.

## **Ghana President Nana Akufo-Addo Visits USAID-backed EAA/ Maagrace Garment Factory**



*EAA Co-founder, Keren Pybus, and EAA Technical Director, Paul Allen, explaining the mask making process to the President of Ghana, H.E. Nana Addo Dankwa Akuffo-Addo, and Minister of Trade and Industry of Ghana, Hon. Alan Kyeremanten.*

**Accra, Ghana, October 5, 2021:** Ghana's President, His Excellency, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, visited the USAID-backed Ethical Apparel Africa (EAA) /Maagrace garment factory. USAID partnered with EAA and Total Family Health Organisation to co-fund Maagrace's mask-making machine and packing facility, as part of efforts to help curb the spread of COVID-19 in Ghana.

USAID, with the West Africa Trade and Investment Hub, continues to help companies in West Africa stay in business and respond to the unexpected demands brought on by the pandemic. As the first facility of its caliber in Ghana, this surgical mask production unit represents a major step forward in achieving self-sufficiency in the local supply of essential PPE, while diversifying sourcing options on the global stage.

The trial phase of the facility was recently visited by the President of Ghana H.E Nana Akufo-Addo and the Minister for Trade and Industry, Honorable Alan Kyerematen. They were taken through the process for auto-making the mask, attaching the ear loops ultrasonically and auto bagging. The cleanroom element will be built once the surgical masks have passed the ASTM standards.

## **Recently energized 498 KM Power Line to Provide Stable and Affordable Electricity to Four Countries in West Africa**



**Liberia, Monrovia:** *TRANSCO CLSG completes and energizes the 498 km Man-Monrovia line thereby providing power to the line into Liberia.*

The CLSG project was initiated by the West African Power Pool (WAPP) with the aim of interconnecting the four countries of Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea. This project involves the construction of the 498 km Man-Monrovia line, which starts in Cote d'Ivoire, cuts through Liberia and Sierra Leone, and ends in Guinea. The line will provide stable and affordable electricity to 60,726 households along the Mano River Basin.

The West African Energy Program (WAEP) team provided technical assistance to TRANSCO CLSG, the regional transmission company, for the construction and powering of the 225 KV Man-Monrovia line. This assistance included: (i) developing their corporate strategy with an actionable roadmap, (ii) utilizing



advanced, high-impact financial technology from construction to commercialization to ensure financial viability and sustainable operation, and (iii) implementing a state-of-the-art cloud Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system. The Program's support enabled timely business insights, improved operational efficiencies, and enhanced capacity and tools that enable innovation that benefit employees and business partners. The WAEP team also provided support to TRANSCO CLSG in organization restructuring, change management, and new business processes to facilitate their transition from a construction to a transmission company to implement projects such as the CLSG.

The project will provide increased access to energy in both Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia. In total, the Man-Monrovia line will connect: (i) 1,874 households in Cote d'Ivoire and (ii) in Liberia: 136 villages; 340,066 inhabitants; 60,726 households; 161 schools and 53 health centers. Power Africa remains committed to supporting increased access to clean energy across the region.

## **Agro Boye/ Trade Hub Partnership to Increase Production of Key Crops in Senegal, Support Food Security**



*Women picking up potatoes from a harvest in Dagana, Saint Louis.*

**Senegal, September 21, 2021:** Through a \$1.1 million co-investment grant from the USAID-funded West Africa Trade & Investment Hub (Trade Hub), Senegal-based agribusiness firm Agro Boye will increase its production capacity of horticultural products, helping to reduce food insecurity and import-dependency in the country.

The company's three-year partnership with the Trade Hub builds on a successful pilot project that the agribusiness implemented in 2019 to boost its potato cultivation using 30 hectares of land. At that time, Agro Boye first invested around \$260,000 and produced 900 metric tons of potato, generating \$314,000 in revenue. The company will now leverage its Trade Hub grant and approximately \$5 million of private capital to further increase its potato production, as well as the production of onions and tomatoes, through preparing and cultivating 240 hectares of virgin land.

"This partnership with the Trade Hub will help us solidify our role as an import-substitute of agricultural products and contribute to a national strategy of nutritional self-reliance," said Birane Boye, CEO of Agro Boye.

By the project's end in April 2024, Agro Boye expects this investment to bring its total production levels to 8,610 metric tons of potatoes, 720 metric tons of tomatoes, and 5,120 metric tons of onions.

Approximately 1,466 local jobs will be created through the increased production of Agro Boye's crops, including for agricultural technicians, irrigators, farm machinery operators, and field workers. The majority of the positions will be allocated to women and youth, in line with both Agro Boye's and the Trade Hub's commitment to ensuring these two groups have increased access to agricultural opportunities. [Discover more.](#)

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